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DEPARTMENT'S MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION COMMITTEE CONDUCTS FIRST MEETING

(BOISE) -- The Mastery-Based Education Committee of the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) held its first meeting June 18th and 19th in the Len B. Jordan building.

The committee, comprised of volunteer education stakeholders from throughout the state and two SDE staff members, is charged with developing recommendations related to the implementation of mastery-based education. That method of instruction allows students to advance through subjects based on their knowledge and achievement in a subject rather than the time spent on a class, also called "seat-time requirements."

The committee will satisfy the conditions of H0110, which passed this legislative session and calls for the SDE to conduct a campaign to evaluate, formulate, and promote understanding and interest in mastery-based education, for teachers, administrators, parents, students, business leaders, and policymakers.

The legislation calls for the committee to identify roadblocks and possible solutions in implementing mastery-based education. It also is responsible for developing recommendations and assisting with the implementation of 20 locally controlled program "incubators" within the public school system by the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

The general concept of mastery-based education, which has seen use in one form or another in a number of schools across the nation since the 1920s, advances students based on their competency and achievement of a specific learning goal. Students move at their own pace, which allows teachers to meet the needs of all students and engage students in their own learning.

Superintendent Sherri Ybarra has offered her full support for the committee's work. "This is taking a prudent, ground-up approach in assessing the potential of a mastery-based system in Idaho," she said in a prior statement about the committee's efforts. "The bottom line is we want to do what is best for kids. If the committee's findings show that this change would be best for kids, then let's keep moving down that path to an Idaho solution."

The committee working towards an Idaho solution based on the direction of H0110 is comprised of the following individuals:

Teachers

- Mike Turnland -- Lake Pend Oreille School District
- Bill McFall -- Troy School District
- Mariea Del Carmen Hernandez -- Wilder School District
- Shelley Coats -- Cassia County

Principals

- Deb McGrath -- Kuna School District;
- Mike Glenn -- Blaine County School District
- David Sotuku -- Marsh Valley School District
- Geoffrey Penrose -- Lake Pend Oreille



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- School District
- Holly Mickelson -- Jefferson County School District.
 - Aaron McKinnon -- Boise School District

Superintendents

- Rene Forsmann -- Cottonwood School District
- John McFarlane -- Basin School District.

- School District
- Gary Comstock -- Jefferson County School District.

Other

- Wally Hedrick, board member for Meridian Technical Charter High School
- Joy Jansen, director of special services -- Lake Pend Oreille School District
- Eian Harm, research coordinator -- West Ada School District
- Sherrilynn Bair, curriculum coordinator -- Snake River School District
- Jeff Simmons, Idaho Digital Learning Academy
- Michelle Clement Taylor, SDE staff and Committee Chairman
- Chris Avila, SDE staff

This committee is being chaired by Michelle Clement Taylor, School Choice coordinator for the Idaho State Department of Education, who conducted the committee's first meeting. The committee conducted the following work:

- Developed a common understanding of mastery based education
- Reviewed mastery based programs in Idaho
- Explored program components from other states
- Drafted awareness campaign messages
- Identified challenges and roadblocks for implementation

Further questions regarding the work of the mastery-based education committee may be directed to Michelle Clement-Taylor at (208) 332-6963 or by email at mtaylor@sde.idaho.gov.

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